

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 13488

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SUBJ: INDONESIAN POLICY TOWARD PORTUGUESE TIMOR

1. ON NOVEMBER 5, PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON
I MET WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR AND CONFIDANT, GENERAL
ALI MURTOPO.

2. MURTOPO SAID HE HAD, IN ANTICIPATION OUR MEETING,
ASKED PRESIDENT IF HE HAD ANY PARTICULAR POINTS HE
WISHED MADE TO ME BEFORE MY DEPARTURE.

3. PRESIDENT HAD TASKED MURTOPO INTER ALI WITH
MAKING TWO POINTS RE PORTUGUESE TIMOR. FIRST,
PRESIDENT RECOGNIZES IMPORTANCE OF GOI AVOIDING
STEPS WHICH COULD LEAD OTHERS TO CHARGE INDONESIA
WITH EXPANSIONIST POLICIES. SECOND, PRESIDENT
RECOGNIZES NEED TO AVOID MILITARY ACTION IN
SOLVING PROBLEM OF TIMOR. MURTOPO EXPLAINED THAT
SUHARTO BELIEVES MILITARY ACTION WOULD NOT ONLY
WORK TO DAMAGE IMAGE OF INDONESIA BUT WOULD, IN PART
BE PROVIDING PROPAGANDA TARGET FOR EXPLOITATION BY

SOVIETS, DO DAMAGE TO IMAGE AND INTERESTS OF US,
GIVEN US STABILIZING ROLE IN PACIFIC AND ASIA, THIS
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NOT IN INTERESTS OF REGION.

4. I ASKED MURTOPO TO EXPRESS TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO APPRECIATION FOR THESE TWO POINTS AND TO ASSURE HIM THEY WOULD BE OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE USG. I NOTED USG HAS WELCOMED PORTUGUESE DECOLONIZATION POLICY AND EXPRESSD BELIEF WASHINGTON WOULD AGREE STRONGLY THAT RESORT TO MILITARY ACTION IN SOLVING PROBLEM OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR WOULD CAUSE UNDESIRABLE PROBLEMS FOR BOTH INDONESIA AND US. PRESIDENT'S SECOND POINT, THEREFORE, WOULD BE PARTICULARLY WELCOME IN WASHINGTON.

5. IN RESPONSE MY QUERY ABOUT VIEWS EXPRESSED BY PORTUGUESE LEADERS DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO PORTUGAL,

MURTOPO SAID LEADERS--INCLUDING PRESIDENT--HAD TOLD

HIM THEY SEE ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES FOR PORTUGUESE TIMOR: CONTINUED ASSOCIATION WITH PORTUGAL OR

INTEGRATION INTO INDONESIA. GOP LEADERS, MURTOPO STRESSED, STATED THEY DO NOT LOOK UPON INDEPENDENCE AS ALTERNATIVE. MOREOVER, HE SAID, THEY STATED THAT THEIR DECOLONIZATION POLICY RULES OUT CONTINUED ASSOCIATION WITH PORTUGAL AS LONG-TERM SOLUTION FOR TIMOR--THUS, IN EFFECT, LEAVING ONLY ONE ALTERNATIVE: INTEGRATION WITH INDONESIA. MURTOPO ADDED THAT GOP LEADERS HAD ASSURED HIM PORTUGAL WILL COOPERATE WITH INDONESIA TOWARD ACHIEVEMENT THIS ALTERNATIVE.

COMMENT: WHILE ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHEN MURTOPO ACTUALLY REFLECTING SUHARTO'S VIEWS(AS HE OFTEN IMPLIES), WE FEEL QUITE CONFIDENT HE MADE TWO POINTS REPORTED IN PARA 3 ABOVE AT REQUEST OF PRESIDENT. NOT ONLY DO POINTS DEMONSTRATE POLITICAL PERCEPTION WHICH WE HAVE NOT SENSED FROM MURTOPO ON ISSUE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR SO FAR, BUT ALSO WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT MURTOPO WOULD MAKE MISTAKE OF FALSELY ATTRIBUTING TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO, IN FRONT OF OTHERS(DCM AND MURTOPO AIDE WERE ALSO PRESENT), SUCH IMPORTANT POINTS OF POLICY.

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